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# SPEECH

OF

# CARL SCHURZ,

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MR. PRESIDENT AND FELLOW-CITIZENS :—

To ascribe great effects to small, far-fetched, and merely incidental causes, is a manner of explaining historical events which weak minds pass off and weaker minds take as an evidence of superier sagacity. Even in those cases where individuals are powerful enough to produce great commotions on their own private motives, such an historical theory is but rarely admissible ; but where a nation acts upon the impulses of the popular heart, it is never so. There are those who find the origin of the great religious Reformation of the sixteenth century in the desire of some German ecclesiastics to get married. There are those who find the origin of the English Revolution in the meanness of one John Hampden, who refused to pay a few shillings of ship money. There are those who tell us that the French Revolution never would have happened but for the secret organization of the Free Masons. Such ridiculous exhibitions of human ingenuity might amuse us had they not frequently exercised a most dangerous influence upon the actions of large classes of people ; for even in our days there are those who pretend to find the origin of the great struggle which is now convulsing this country in a few anti-slavery tracts circulated by a few Abolitionists from New England ; and what is worse, there are many who believe it ; and what is still worse, there are many who are prepared to act upon that belief.

True, the first origin of great developments is sometimes apparently small, but only apparently so. It requires an acorn fallen from an oak tree to make another oak tree grow. Ever so large a quantity of mustard-seed will never do it. And even an acorn will not, if it falls upon a rock. In order to make clear to our minds the true nature of the struggle in which we are engaged, you must suffer me to look back upon the original composition of American society.

The men who established the first settlements in New England were almost all plebeians—true children of the people. They

had not abandoned their old homes merely for the purpose of seeking in the wilds of the new world a material fortune, which the old world had refused them. They were the earnest champions of a principle, and they left their native shores because there that principle was persecuted and oppressed. They sought and found upon the rocky soil of New England a place where they could conform their social condition to their religious belief. Equal in their origin and social standing, inspired by the same motives, engaged with equal interest in the same enterprises, pursuing the same ends, and sharing the same fortunes—their instincts, however crudely developed, were necessarily all democratic. Their natural tendency was not to produce in the new world a social inequality, which in the old world had heavily weighed upon them, but had never existed among themselves. Every institution they founded had in view the equality of the citizens, and by originating a system of public education for *all* the children of the people, they endeavored to perpetuate that equality which originally was the characteristic feature of their society. It is true there was a great variety in their occupations: agriculture, handicraft, commerce, industry, learned professions; but all these occupations being equally respectable, they produced no permanent distinctions in society, for what one might be another might become. Equality, and the democratic spirit arising from it, was the basis of their whole social and political organization. These tendencies they and their descendants carried all over the Northern States, and although the Puritans gradually dropped most of their religious and social peculiarities, and although they, as a race, became largely intermingled with other classes of people, yet those original tendencies pervaded the whole social and political system as a powerful leaven, and thus determined the character of Northern society and civilization.

This is the spirit to which the North owes her thrift and industry, her education, her liberty, her progressive enterprise, her prosperity, and her greatness.

It was not so with the original settlers of the Southern country, especially Virginia. Some of them were scions of the noble houses of England; they belonged to the privileged class at home. They went to the new country, those that were rich

and powerful in order to increase their wealth and power, and those that were poor and insignificant in order to gain in the new world what they had been vainly striving to find in the old. All were seeking new fortunes upon a new field of action. Such were the Cavaliers; and those who followed them were not permitted to forget here the difference of station which had separated them from their patrons at home. The aristocratic gradations of European society, naturally modified by the necessities of American life, were as much as possible imitated, or rather retained, and the general tendency of things was more favorable to the preservation than to the abolition of social distinctions. This manifested itself clearly in the business enterprises of the new world aristocracy. Large landed estates were formed, the cultivation of which required the labor of a vast number of subordinates. Various ways were devised in which this labor could be made obligatory; a peculiar system of white serfdom was attempted, and everything seemed to concur in making the superiority of the few over the many an hereditary and permanent institution. This tendency fixed the character of Southern society and civilization. This is the spirit to which the South owes her domestic tyranny, her lack of enterprise, the poverty and ignorance of her masses, the slowness of her progress.

It is probable—nay, it is almost certain—that the aristocratic character of Southern society would have been unable to maintain itself, and to impress its mark permanently upon their political institutions, had not the importation of a class of persons, of whom it was taken for granted that they had to labor, not for themselves, but for others, furnished a welcome expedient.

But for the introduction of negro slavery, the aristocratic landholders of the South would not have succeeded in fastening upon any class of people the burden of obligatory labor; aristocracy would have lost its foundation, and been obliged to yield to the democratic spirit natural to the inhabitants of a new country. But in negro slavery it found a congenial element; slavery was the soil which nourished and fostered and sustained the roots of aristocracy against the democratic breeze.

I may remark here, by the way, that by tracing the aristo-

eratic tendency of Southern society back to the Cavaliers who founded the settlements in Virginia, I do not mean to admit the ridiculous claim of the latter-day chivalry, that they are a superior race of people and have all sorts of noble blood in their veins. Society became somewhat mixed, and among the proudest slave-barons of the day, there are certainly a good many descendants of men who, if England had to dispose of them again, would be sent to Botany Bay instead of Virginia; while other Southern nobles may run up their pedigree to some speculative Yankee pedlar.

What I mean to say is, that the character of the original settlers determined the character of social and political institutions, while subsequently these institutions in their turn determined the character of the inhabitants. I am also well aware that political doctrines were cultivated in the two groups of colonies and States which apparently contradict this representation, but only apparently, for in democracies practice frequently goes ahead of theory, while in aristocracies frequently theories are cherished, the full realization of which would greatly disturb the society which cherishes them.

Thus we trace in the first stages of American history two distinct currents, one running in the direction of social and political equality, and the other in the direction of permanent social and political distinctions—the one essentially democratic, the other essentially aristocratic. These currents were running smoothly side by side as long as they were kept asunder by the separate colonial governments. But they became directly antagonistic as soon as, by the organization of the different colonies into one republic, a field of common problems was opened to them where they had to meet. Then the question arose, which of the two currents should determine the character of the future development of the American republic? and this question, meanwhile expanded to gigantic dimensions, is the one we have been so warmly discussing these forty or fifty years, and which we are now about to decide.

Pardon me for having commenced my speech with the Pilgrim fathers and the first settlers of Virginia. I desired to show that William Lloyd Garrison and Gerrit Smith are not altogether responsible for the great rebellion. And if you give me leave I

will proceed to show that the Republican party is not altogether responsible for that event either. I may then arrive at some conclusions having a direct bearing upon the burning questions we have at present to solve.

The struggle against Great Britain commenced, and the two great elements, the democratic and aristocratic, went harmoniously together. They had one great common problem to solve—that was the problem of the first historical period of the American people, the achievement of political independence, the foundation of the new American nationality, and the defence of that incipient nationality against its enemies abroad. While struggling together for that common object, they had every conceivable inducement for going hand in hand. The natural antagonism had as yet but imperfectly disclosed itself. And, indeed, at that time, there was another possibility of permanently harmonizing the conflicting elements.

The spirit of the leaders, as well as the instincts of the masses, had risen above the range of ordinary feelings. The philosophy of the eighteenth century had made the statesmen of the Revolution anti-slavery men on principle. The elevation of mind and the generous emotions nourished by that great struggle for liberty had confirmed them in their faith. They had expanded their desire for colonial independence into a broad assertion of the rights of human nature. From such convictions and impulses grew that grand platform of human liberty and equality—the Declaration of Independence. All their public acts relating to the subject were based upon the conviction that the abnormity of slavery was to be put upon the course of ultimate extinction. Hence the great ordinance of 1787, and the legislation about the slave trade. And, indeed, had that spirit continued to govern the destinies of this republic, slavery would have been gradually abolished, the foundation of the aristocratic tendency would have been taken away, and the future development of the country would have been placed upon the solid and fertile ground of social and political harmony embodied in truly democratic institutions.

But this healthy development was suddenly interfered with—"by the Abolitionists," our opponents will say. No, not by the Abolitionists, for the general Abolition spirit of that period

had brought slavery near its death. No, it was interfered with by the invention of the cotton-gin; and, strange enough, a progress in manufacturing industry worked a most deplorable reaction in moral and political ideas. Slavery, drooping in most of the States, became suddenly profitable, and the sordid greediness of gain crushed down in a great many hearts the love of principle. Slavery, instead of being an evil, a scourge and a disgrace, became suddenly a great economical, moral and political blessing. New theories of government sprang out of this economical revolution, and the same system of social organization which but a short time before had been the foulest blot on the American name, was suddenly discovered to be the corner-stone of democratic institutions. Even ministers of Christianity joined in the frantic dance around the golden calf, and anointed the idol with the sanction of divine origin.

Such was the interference which prevented the abolition of slavery. Then the aristocratic character of Southern society was developed to a stronger and more obnoxious form. The old Cavalier element lost most of its best attributes; but its worst impulses found a congenial institution to feed upon, and out of the Cavalier grew the slave-lord. The struggle between the two antagonistic elements began now in earnest, and out of it grew the germs of the Rebellion as an almost inevitable consequence.

Permit me to show the most characteristic features of this strange history. Slavery, finding itself condemned by the universal opinion of mankind, wanted power in order to stand against so formidable an adversary. There was method in its proceedings. First it consolidated itself at home. To this end it planted itself upon the doctrine of State rights, in the Southern acceptance of the word. I will call it the doctrine of slave States rights, for the rights of the free States was a thing which the doctrine did not include. It did this in order to protect itself from outside interference while adapting the laws and institutions of the several slave States completely to its interests and aspirations. Whenever the rights of man and the fundamental liberties of the people—free speech, free press, trial by jury, writ of *habeas corpus*—came into conflict with the ruling interest, they were, in the slave States, most unceremoniously

overridden. The possession of slaves became an indispensable qualification for office—in some States by law, in others by custom. The exceptions were rare. The slave power assumed a most absolute dictatorship, which gradually absorbed all the guarantees of popular liberty. So much for its home policy.

But it did not stop there. Finding that the democratic element of free labor society, with which it was yoked together by the national organization of this republic, had an expansive tendency, and was growing stronger every day, out of all proportion, and fearing to be crowded out and overwhelmed by it, the slave power deemed it necessary either to control or to suppress that element. Its State rights doctrine was an entrenched position, from which it now commenced making aggressive sallies. Morbidly sensitive of the rights of its own States, it asked that for its benefit the rights of the people of the free States should be put down; it imperiously demanded the suppression of anti-slavery papers and the punishment of anti-slavery speakers; in some cases it enforced its demand by arson and murder. This tendency brought forth at a later period the most flagrant violation of the rights of the free States, the monstrous Fugitive Slave Law, which, setting aside trial by jury and *habeas corpus*, demanded the rendition of fugitives, not according to the laws and forms of justice prevailing in the States where the fugitives were caught, but by a rule of summary and arbitrary proceeding dictated to Congress by the slave power, and by Congress, thus ruled, to the people. These proceedings made it necessary for the people of the North to stand up in defence of the rights of their own States. Thus the slave power, while insisting upon State rights for itself, endeavored to accumulate power in its own hands to control the rest of the States according to its interests.

But the accumulation of power was not complete. The slave power wanted to rule the whole machinery not only of its own States, but of the General Government also, for its own purposes. It wanted to adapt the whole of our national institutions to its own interests. It wanted a permanently controlling influence in our national legislature. Hence its cry for a "balance of power," which meant either a permanent majority in Congress, or, if that could not be had, a vote strong enough



to constitute a power of veto on all legislative acts. Hence its opposition to the admission of new free States; hence its demand that slavery should take possession of all the national territories, out of which new slave States might be formed. In this manner the slave power worked steadily for the conquest of supreme and absolute control of our national affairs; and had it succeeded, the republic would now lie at its feet bound hand and foot, and the aristocratic element in this country would have achieved one of the strangest victories over the progressive spirit of this age.

It must be admitted, the slave power carried out its policy with such consummate acuteness that Machiavelli himself, if he lived to day, might profit from its teachings. The South was weak, the North was strong; but the South was united, and the North divided. The slave interest held the balance of power between the political parties of the country. In an evil hour—an evil hour indeed for this republic—a political party inaugurated that most demoralizing, that most pernicious principle, that to the victors belong the spoils. And the slave power rose up and said, “Only to him will I give these things who falls down and worships me.” And they fell down and worshipped in turn, but the “Democratic” party worshipped most. To the victors belonged the spoils, and victory with the spoils could only be obtained by co-operation with and untiring subserviency to the slave power.

This was one of those dark periods in our our political history which may send a blush to every manly cheek, and make us almost doubt of the innate nobility of human nature. The fate of a democratic republic seemed almost decided by the self-degradation of freemen. What the united energy of the slave power might have vainly attempted, the inexhaustible obsequiousness of its Northern allies would have accomplished had there not been a residue of virtue in the people.

But in the course of this struggle for absolute dominion, the slave power showed one tendency which gave it an entirely new aspect. At the time when it had intrenched itself in its doctrine of State rights, and was about to try its strength in offensive operations, it raised the threat of separation, secession, disunion, in order to enforce its demands. And that cry remained ever since its staple threat; and, fostered and strengthened by North-

ern obsequiousness, it became its most formidable weapon. What did this cry mean? It meant this: "If you will not permit us to rule this nation, we are determined to ruin it." This cry was raised and reiterated again and again, long before you heard of a Republican party. Then the slave power established its disloyal character, its anti-national tendency. It was then—mark what I say—it was then the great Rebellion began.

The slave power, which formerly had been only the adversary of an opposite element in the nation, became then the enemy of the nation itself. To be ruled by one who continually threatened to murder her—that was the situation of the American republic. Then the Northern people had to struggle, not only for their rights and liberties, their dignity and prosperity, but in struggling against the pretensions of the slave power they fought for the life of American nationality. By one of the most singular perversions of human logic, the party of the slave power called itself the national party. While it was admitted in the North, that freedom was national and slavery was sectional, the party of freedom was stigmatized as sectional, the party of slavery eulogized as national. A party, the main body of which continually flourished the knife of the assassin over the head of the nation—that party national! A truly loyal and national man will never feel tempted even to threaten the life of the nation; the slave power disclosed its enmity to the nationality, first by the threat, and then the earnestness of the threat by the attempt.

At last, when under Buchanan's Administration the assumptions and usurpations of the slave power culminated in the Dred Scott and Lecompton policy, the people of the North, the democratic element of the country, rose up, and at the election of 1860 it vindicated its liberties and its manhood. It rescued the republic from the grasp of an anti-democratic as well as anti-national power. Then the second great period of the history of the American people arrived at the crisis of its development. The first had solved the problem of achieving the foundation of the new nationality and defending it against its great enemy abroad; the problem of the second is to maintain the American nationality by defending it against its great enemy at home. The election of 1860 was a notice given to the slave power that the American nation meant no longer to live in cowardly fear of

the murderous knife pointed at its heart by a set of imperious aristocrats, but that it meant to take its government into its own hands. This was the first grand uprising of the democratic spirit of the people against the absolute control of the slave power. The high-handed attempt of the latter to force the people to surrender the attributes of our Government, springing from the northern spirit of equality, to the Southern spirit of aristocratic dominion was foiled, and the slave power, seeing that its arrogated privilege to rule the nation was denied, began to execute its threat to ruin it. It withdrew at once into its doctrine of slave States rights, and, carrying it to the criminal extent of secession, struck its murderous blow at the life of the nation. It transferred the contest from the forum to the battlefield, and once more Roundheads and Cavaliers, Democracy and Aristocracy, meet each other in arms. This is the history of the origin of this revolution. I call it a revolution, for it is a rebellion only on their side; it is a revolution for the American people. This is the true character of the great struggle for the preservation of our nationality, a struggle which was initiated, not when the first gun was fired upon Fort Sumter, but when the slave aristocracy uttered the first threat of disunion; which arrived at its crisis when the slave aristocracy failed in its attempt to obtain complete control over our National Government, and struck the blow against the life of the nation; and which cannot end until the anti-national spirit is extinguished by the destruction of the institution which begot and fostered it.

I have led you through this long and perhaps tedious summary of our social and political history for the purpose of showing that our present struggle is the natural outgrowth of an antagonism of which we find the germs in the first organization of American society. I have shown, also, that the aristocratic element, after having identified itself with the system of slavery, acted upon the command of its necessities. Its principal crime consisted at the beginning, and consists to-day, in its identifying itself with slavery instead of yielding to the democratic principles upon which a healthy national organization could be founded. But remaining faithful to slavery, it was impelled by the irresistible power of logic, from step to step, until at last it landed in the domain of high treason. Finding slavery endangered by public

opinion, it was natural that it should shut itself up against that dangerous influence. But being yoked together in a common national organization, with the threatening influence of the expansive democratic element, it was natural that it should endeavor to control or suppress it by all the expedients of corruption and intimidation. But failing in this finally, it was natural that it should try to shut itself up more effectually; to isolate itself completely, by breaking up the national organization which held it under an influence so dangerous to its existence. Thus slavery, impelled by its necessities from step to step, was the real, the natural traitor against the American nationality, and the Southern people are only the victims of its inevitable treason. But if slavery, the enemy of American nationality, could not act otherwise without giving itself up, how are you to act, the defenders of American nationality?

The answer would seem to every unprejudiced mind as plain as the question. Still, strange as it may appear at first sight, there is a difference of opinion. Only three lines of policy suggest themselves. The most fertile ingenuity could not invent any beyond these three. Either we must permit the slave aristocracy to isolate itself territorially as well as politically—that is, we must consent to the breaking up of the American nationality; or secondly, we must preserve our Union and nationality by striking down its enemies in arms, and by extinguishing the social and political agency which in its nature is disloyal and anti-national; or thirdly, we must invite the slave aristocracy back into the national organization, offering to it that supreme and absolute control of our national concerns without which it cannot insure its permanency in the Union.

On the first proposition the people have already pronounced their judgment. To accept it was impossible. The question has been discussed thousands of times; and every enlightened mind, every true American heart, has always arrived at the same conclusion. Considerations of policy, national existence, safety, liberty, civilization, peace, all lead to the same result. The old cry, "The Union must and shall be preserved!" is not a mere watchword of party. It is the instinctive outcry of the deepest convictions, of the immovable religious faith of the American mind. This conviction, this faith, is proclaimed by the thunder of ourartil-

lery; it is confirmed by our victories; it is sealed with the blood of the people. This question is no longer open to discussion.

But the conflict between the two other propositions is the real point at issue in our present controversy. Our opponents may speak of tyranny, but the violence of their own denunciations gives the lie to their own assertions. It is dust thrown into the eyes of a deluded multitude. They may no longer have the courage to say that they are for slavery; they are still base enough to say that they are not against it. All their tirades and declamations hang loosely around this sentiment. The true issue, divested of all its incidental questions, is this: A nation ruled by the slave power or a nation governing itself. For the first they are ready to imperil victory and peace and Union; for the second, we are ready to destroy slavery forever.

The second line of policy before mentioned has been consistently acted upon by the party holding the reins of Government during the struggle. On some occasion President Lincoln uttered the following words: "I am not controlling events, but events control me." These words, applicable, of course, only to the leading measures of policy, have been denounced and ridiculed as a confession of weakness; I see in them a sign of a just understanding of his situation. Revolutionary developments are never governed by the preconceived plans of individuals. Individuals may understand them, and shape their course accordingly: they may aid in their execution and facilitate their progress; they may fix their results in the form of permanent laws and institutions; but individuals will never be able to determine their character by their own conceptions. Every such attempt will prove abortive, and lead to violent reactions. A policy which is so controlled by the spirit of the times, and is based upon a just appreciation of circumstances, may, perhaps, not be very brilliant, but it will be safe, and, above all, eminently democratic. And I venture to suggest that a great many of those who indulge in the highest sounding figures of speech as to what great things they would do, if they had the power, would hardly be capable of conceiving so wise an idea as that which the president expressed in language so simple and so modest. And thus the Government has steadily followed the voice of events—slowly, indeed, but never retracing a step.

Slowly, did I say? We are apt to forget the ordinary relations of time, at a moment when the struggle of a century is compressing itself into the narrow compass of days and hours. What was to be done, and what was done, is plain. I showed you how, after the establishment of the first colonies, the democratic spirit natural to new organizations failed to absorb the aristocratic element, on account of the introduction of slavery. I showed you how the philosophy of the eighteenth century, and the lofty spirit of the Revolutionary period, failed in gradually abolishing slavery in consequence of an economical innovation. Those two great moments were lost; the full bearing of the question was not understood. But now the slave power itself made us understand it. Now at last slavery rose in arms against our nationality. It defied us, for our own salvation, to destroy it. Slavery itself, with its defiance, put the weapon into our hands, and in obedience to the command of events the Government of the republic has at last struck the blow. Treason defied us, obliged us to strike it, and we struck it on the head. The Government has not controlled events, but, resolutely following their control, proclaimed the emancipation of the slave. Mr. Lincoln was not the originator of the decree, he was the recorder of it. The executors are the people in arms.

But the opponents of the Government say that by this act the war was diverted from its original object; that it was commenced for the restoration of the Union only, but was made a war for the abolition of slavery. It will not be difficult to show the shallowness of this subterfuge of bad consciences. Those who read history understandingly well know that revolutionary movements run in a certain determined direction; that the point from which they start may be ascertained, but that you cannot tell beforehand how far they will go. The extent of their progress depends upon the strength of the opposition they meet; if the opposition is weak and short, the revolution will stop short also; but if the opposition is strong and stubborn, the movement will roll on until every opposing element in its path is trodden down and crushed.

I invite our opponents to look back upon the war of the Revolution. Was the Revolution commenced for the achievement of independence from Great Britain? No; it was commenced in

opposition to the arbitrary acts of the British Government; it was commenced for the redress of specified grievances and in vindication of colonial rights and liberties. Far-reaching minds may have foreseen the ultimate development, but it is well known that some of the most energetic revolutionary characters disclaimed most emphatically all intention to make the colonies independent not long before independence was actually declared. And how did they come to divert the Revolutionary war from its original object? The process was simple. They permitted themselves to be controlled by events. In the course of the struggle they came to the conclusion that the rights and liberties of the colonies would not be secure as long as the British Government had the power to enforce arbitrary measures in this country; they saw that British dominion was incompatible with American liberty. Then independence was declared. It was decreed by the logic of events; it was recorded by Jefferson; it was enforced by Washington.

This was the way in which a struggle for a mere redress of grievances was "perverted" into a struggle for the abolition of British dominion. Is there anybody to-day bold enough to assert that this perversion was illegitimate? Let us return to the crisis in which we are engaged.

We went into the war for the purpose of maintaining the Union and preserving our nationality. Although it was the slave power which had attempted to break up the Union, we did, at first, not touch slavery in defending the Union. No, with a scrupulousness of very doubtful merit, slavery was protected by many of our leaders—especially one of them, who at that time held the highest military command, made it a special object not to hurt slavery while fighting against the rebellious slaveholder, and he exhausted all the resources of his statesmanship for that purpose. It is true he exhausted at the same time the patience of the people. That statesmanship threatened to exhaust all our military and financial resources; but if, indeed, it did threaten to exhaust the resources of the Rebellion, the threat was very gentle. You remember the results of that period of kid-glove policy, which the South found so very gentlemanly; reverse after reverse: popular discontent rising to despondency; ruin staring us in the face. The war threatened, indeed, to become a failure;

and if the resolution of the Chicago Convention, which declared the war a failure, had special reference to the period when the distinguished candidate of the Democratic party was General-in-Chief, then, it must be confessed, the Chicago Convention showed a certain degree of judgment.

Gradually it became clear to every candid mind that slavery, untouched, constituted the strength of the Rebellion; but that slavery, touched, would constitute its weakness. The negro tilled its fields and fed its armies; the negro carried its baggage and dug its trenches; and the same negro was longing for the day when he would be permitted to fight for the Union instead of being forced to work for the Rebellion. To oblige him to work for the Rebellion instead of permitting him to fight for the Union, would have been more than folly; it would have been a crime against the nation. To give him his freedom, then, was an act of justice not only to him but to the American republic.

If the rebellious slave power had submitted after the first six months of the war, it is possible that slavery might have had another lease of life. But its resistance being vigorous and stubborn; and not only that, but its resistance being crowned with success, it became a question of life or death—the death of the nation or the death of slavery. Then the Government chose. It chose the life of the nation by the death of slavery; and the revolution rolled over the treasonable institution and crushed it wherever it found it.

Could an act which undermined the strength of the enemy, and in the same measure added to our own—could that be called diverting the war from its original purpose? Was not the object of the war to restore the Union? How then could we refrain from using for our purposes an element which was certain to contribute most powerfully to that end? Was it not the object of the war to make the Union permanent by restoring loyalty to the Union? But by what means in the world can loyalty be restored, if it is not by crushing out the element which breeds disloyalty and treason as its natural offspring?

But if it is the opinion of our opponents that it was the original object of the war to lay the North helpless at the feet of the South, then it must be admitted the war is now much perverted from its original object.



The matter stands clear in the light of experience. Every man who professes to be for the Union and shows any tenderness for an agency which is bound to destroy the Union, has in his heart a dark corner into which the spirit of true loyalty has not yet penetrated. And on the other hand, every man, whatever his previous opinions may have been, as soon as he throws his whole heart into the struggle for the Union, throws at the same time his whole heart into the struggle against slavery.

Look at some of the brightest names which the history of this period will hand down to posterity: your own Daniel S. Dickinson, Benjamin F. Butler, of Massachusetts, the venerable Breckinridge, of Kentucky, the brave Andrew Johnson, of Tennessee, and many thousands of brave spirits of less note. You cannot say that they were Abolitionists; but they are honestly for the death of slavery because they are honestly for the life of the nation.

Emancipation would have been declared in this war even if there had not been a single Abolitionist in America before the war. The measure followed as naturally, as necessarily, upon the first threatening successes of the Rebellion, as a clap of thunder follows upon a flash of lightning. Nay, if there had been a life-long pro-slavery man in the Presidential chair, but a Union man of a true heart and a clear head—such a man as will lay his hand to the plough without looking back—he would, after the first year of the Rebellion, have stretched out his hand to William Lloyd Garrison, and would have said to him, “Thou art my man.” Listening to the voice of reason, duty, conscience, he would have torn the inveterate prejudice from his heart, and with an eager hand he would have signed the death-warrant of the treacherous idol. And you speak of diverting the war from its legitimate object? As in the war of the Revolution no true patriot shrunk back from the conclusion that colonial rights and liberties could not be permanently secured but by the abolition of British dominion, so in our times no true Union men can shrink back from the equally imperative conclusion that the permanency of the Union cannot be secured but by the abolition of its arch enemy—which is slavery. The Declaration of Independence was no more the natural, logical, and legitimate consequence of the struggle for colonial rights and liberties, than

the Emancipation Proclamation is the natural, logical, and legitimate consequence of our struggle for the Union. The Emancipation Proclamation is the true sister of the Declaration of Independence; it is the supplementary act; it is the Declaration of Independence translated from universal principle into universal fact. And the two great State papers will stand in the history of this country as the proudest monuments not only of American statesmanship, American spirit, and American virtue, but also of the earnestness and good faith of the American heart. The Fourth of July, 1776, will shine with tenfold lustre, for its glory is at last completed by the first of January, 1863.

Thus the same logic of things which had driven the naturally disloyal slave aristocracy to attempt the destruction of the Union impelled the earnest defenders of the Union to destroy slavery.

Still, we are told that the Emancipation Proclamation had an injurious effect upon the conduct of the war. This may sound supremely ridiculous at this moment, but it seems there is nothing too ridiculous for the leaders of the Opposition to assert, and nothing too ridiculous for their followers to believe. Still, let us hear them. They say that the anti-slavery policy of the Government divided the North and united the South. And who were these patriots who so clamorously complained of the divisions in the North? They were the same men who divided. I will tell them what the anti-slavery policy of the Government did do.

It furnished a welcome pretext for those in the North whose loyalty was shaky, and it permanently attached to our colors four millions of hearts in the South whose loyalty was sound.

It brought every man down to his true level.

It made the negro a fighting patriot, and it made the pro-slavery peace Democrat a skulking tory.

It added two hundred thousand black soldiers to our armies, and it increases their number daily.

I wish to call your special attention to this point. I will not discuss the soldierly qualities of the negro. Although on many bloody fields he has proved them, and although I consider a black man fighting for his and our liberty far superior, as a soldier, to a white man who dodges a fight against slavery, yet, for argument's sake, I am willing to suppose that the negro

soldier is best to be used as a garrison and guard-soldier on our immense lines of railroads, in fortified places and posts. This, not even our opponents will deny. But do they not see that, in using him thus, we can release so many white veterans from such duty and send them forward to the battle-field? Do they not see that only in this way it becomes possible to effect those formidable concentrations of military power, and thus to achieve those glorious results which have made the rebellion reel and the hearts of Northern traitors quake? Do they not see that, while it may not be the negro who beats the enemy on the battle-field, it is more than doubtful whether, without the negro reinforcement, we could hurl such strength against the enemy as makes victory sure? No wonder that there are opposed to the negro soldiers those whose cheeks grew pale when they heard of the taking of Atlanta, and of Sheridan whirling the rebels out of the Valley of Virginia. The Emancipation Proclamation, I say, added two hundred thousand black soldiers to our armies, and it may indeed have kept some white ones away, who merely wanted an excuse for not going anyhow.

They say a white soldier cannot fight by the side of the negro. I know of white soldiers who were very glad to see the negro fight by their side. Ask our brave men at Petersburg, along the Mississippi, and on the Southern coast. Their cheers, when they saw the black columns dash upon the works of the enemy, did not sound like indignant protests against the companionship. But those dainty folks who raise the objection as a point of honor will, I candidly believe, indeed, not fight by the side of the negro, for they are just the men who will not fight at all.

The Emancipation Proclamation and the enlistment of negroes had an injurious effect upon the war; and because the emancipation decree had an injurious effect upon the war, the war is a "failure!" Indeed, it looks much like it! The Peace Democrats may call a man who undoubtedly is high authority with them, they may call Jefferson Davis himself upon the stand as a witness, to say what he thinks of this failure; they may call for the professional opinions of Lee, Johnston, Hood and Early, and I am willing to abide by it. Attorneys Grant, Sherman, Sheridan and Farragut have already entered their pleas in the case, and, methinks, the judicial bench of history is about to pro-

nounce the final verdict. And when that verdict is out, the genius of Justice will rejoice that the power of the slave aristocracy could be beaten down in spite of its united efforts and of the exhaustion of all its resources, and that the cause of liberty and Union could triumph without the support of those whose hearts were divided between God and mammon. Yes, freedom will at one blow have conquered the whole force of its adversaries—those that were in arms against it as open enemies, and those that imperilled its success as uncertain friends.

But the Emancipation Proclamation did us still another service. It is well known that at the beginning of the war not only the sympathies of the most powerful European governments were against us, but that the sympathies of European nations were doubtful. Our armies were beaten, our prospects looked hopeless, and to the current running against us we had to offer no counterpoise. The nations of Europe looked across the ocean with anxious eyes, and asked: "Will not now, at last, the great blow be struck against the most hideous abomination of this age? Are they so in love with it that they will not even destroy it to save themselves?" For you must know every European is a natural anti-slavery man. His heart, although burdened with many loads, has not been corrupted by the foul touch of that institution, which seems to demoralize everything that breathes its atmosphere. And when they saw, to their utter astonishment and disgust, that at first slavery was not touched, their hearts sunk within them, and they began to explain the reverses we suffered by the moral weakness of our cause.

At last the Emancipation Proclamation came. A shout of triumph went up from every liberty-loving heart. Once more the friends of freedom in every hemisphere joined in a common sympathy. Once more the cause of the American people became the cause of liberty the world over. Once more our struggle was identified with the noblest aspirations of the human race. Once more our reverses found a response of sorrow in the great heart of mankind, and our victories aroused a jubilant acclaim which rolled around the globe. Do you remember the touching address of the workingmen of Manchester? While the instincts of despotism everywhere conspired against us with their sneering contempt; while the laboring men in England began to suffer by

the stopping of the cotton supply, and the nobility and the princes of industry told them that their misery was our fault, the great heart of the poor man rose in its magnificence, and the English laborer stretched his hard hand across the Atlantic to grasp that of our President, and he said: All hail, Liberator! Although want and misery may knock at my doors, mind it not. I may suffer, but you be firm! Let the slave be free, let the dignity of human nature be vindicated, let universal liberty triumph! All hail, American people! we are your brothers.

And this sympathy did not remain a mere idle exchange of friendly feelings. That sympathy controlled public opinion in Europe, and that public opinion held in check the secret desires of unfriendly Governments. Mason and Slidell slink from ante-chamber to ante-chamber like ticket-of-leave men, and they find written above every door the inscription, "No slavery here!" No Government would dare to recognize the slaveholding Confederacy without loading itself down with the contempt and curses of the people. The irresistible moral power of a great and good cause has achieved for us victories abroad no less signal than the victories our arms achieved for us at home. Our arms will lay the enemies of the nation helpless at our feet, but emancipation has pressed the heart of the world to our hearts.

But our opponents are not moved by all this. They come with their last pitiable quibble, and I beg your pardon for answering that also. They say, "Your Emancipation Proclamation was nothing but wind after all." The proclamation did not effect the emancipation of the slaves. It is true, slavery is not abolished by the proclamation alone, just as little as by the mere Declaration of Independence the British armies were driven away and the independence of the Colonies established. But that declaration was made good forever by the taking of Yorktown, and I feel safe in predicting that our proclamation will be made as good forever by the taking of Richmond. But there is one point at which all parallel with the Revolution fails. If in those times a person had proposed to make an anti-independence man Commander-in-Chief, he would have been put into the mad-house, while in our days those are running around loose who

seriously try to persuade the people to make an anti-emancipation man President of the United States.

Yes, incredible as it may seem to all who are not initiated into the mysteries of American politics, the idea is seriously entertained to carry out that third line of policy of which I spoke before—to invite the slave power back into the national organization, offering to it that supreme and absolute control of our national concerns without which it cannot insure its permanency in the Union; and, adroitly enough, this programme has been condensed into a single euphonious sentence which is well apt to serve as the campaign cry of a party. It is this: The Union must be restored as it was. We are frequently cautioned against visionaries in politics, because with their extravagant schemes they are apt to lead people into dangerous and costly experiments. But the visionaries in innovation are harmless compared with the visionaries who set their hearts upon restoring what has definitively gone, and has become morally impossible; for while the former may find it difficult to make the people believe in the practicability of their novel ideas, the latter not rarely succeed in persuading the multitude that what has been may be again. Such a visionary was Napoleon, who planned the restoration of the empire of Charlemagne; he flooded Europe with blood and failed. But the restoration of the empire of Charlemagne was mere child's play in comparison with the restoration of the Union "as it was," and a task far more difficult than that to which the genius of old Napoleon succumbed is by a discriminating fate wisely set apart for our "young Napoleon" to perform. We are, indeed, assured by his friends that he will again exhaust all the resources of his statesmanship for that purpose. This statesmanship is indeed very obliging. It can hardly have recovered from its first exhaustion, and now it tells us kindly that it is ready to exhaust itself once more. It would be uncivil to accept the sacrifice. We will take the good will for the deed and dispense with it. Still, I consider it an evidence of appreciative judgment on the part of his friends to have selected just that candidate for a task, which can be performed only in his characteristic manner: setting out with a grand flourish of promises and coming back with a grander flourish of apologies.

Restore the Union "as it was!" Did you ever hear of a

great war that left a country in the same condition in which it had found it? Did you ever hear of a great revolution which left the political and social relations of the contending parties as they had been before the struggle? And there are visionaries who believe that relations which rested upon mutual confidence can be restored when that confidence has been drowned in a sea of blood? Do you really think you can ever restore the confidence "as it was" between two companions, one of whom was detected in an attempt to rob and murder the other in his sleep? By no process of reasoning can you prove—nay, not even in the wildest flights of your imagination can you conceive the possibility, that the relations between a dominant and an enslaved race can be placed upon the ancient footing, when two hundred thousand men of the enslaved race have been in arms against their masters, and in arms, too, at the call of the supreme authority of the republic. You cannot leave them such as they are; you cannot permit them even to remember that they have fought for us as well as themselves, without following up the events which made them what they are, to the full consummation of the freedom of the race. And, on the other hand, you cannot keep the race in bondage without reducing those who now are fighting for their and our freedom to their former state of subjection; and you cannot do this without inaugurating the most sweeping, the most violent and bloody reaction against justice and liberty the world ever witnessed. And you cannot provoke that reaction without provoking another revolution on its heels. And now you speak of restoring the Union "as it was!"

Such things have been tried before, and we find the consequences on the records of history. England had her restoration of the Stuart dynasty, and it led to the revolution of 1688. France had her restoration of the Bourbon dynasty, and it led to the revolution of 1830. And why these revolutions? Because the Stuarts tried a reaction against the principles sealed with English blood at Naseby; because the Bourbons tried a reaction against the principles sealed with French blood at the Bastille and a hundred battle-fields. Might not America profit by the example? You think you can restore the cotton dynasty without provoking reaction and another revolution? But for our opponents, it seems, history has no intelligible voice. We have

only to shake hands with the Rebels, and the past is blotted out. We have only to act as if nothing had happened, and all will be as it was before something did happen. This is their promise. I appeal to the people. If your leaders promised you to revive all those fallen in battle, and to gather up the blood spilt on so many fields, and to infuse it into the veins of the resurrected, the presumption upon your credulity could not be more extravagant. Are you so devoid of pride, are you so completely without self-respect, as to permit so gross an imposition to be presented to you, as if you were capable of being taken in by it? Will you suffer them to insult your understanding, and to stamp you as incorrigible fools, with impunity? This, indeed, is one of the cases in which we do not know what to admire most—the towering impudence of the imposters or the unfathomable stupidity of the victims. Let those who go into the open trap of the jugglers, glory in the reputation of the folly. But a man of sense cannot permit himself to be gulled by so transparent an absurdity without despising himself. I call upon you to vindicate the fair fame of the Americans as an intelligent people!

But it would be unfair to presume that those who raised the artful cry have merely done so for the purpose of setting a trap for political idiots. There is really something which they do want to restore, and there they are in earnest. They really do mean to revive one feature of the old Union; not that fidelity to the eternal principles of justice and liberty which in the early times of this republic was the admiration of mankind, but another thing, which has become an object of disgust to every patriotic heart, and has succeeded in creating doubts in the practicability of democratic institutions. I spoke of the demoralizing principle: “To the victors belong the spoils,” and how, during the most disgraceful period of our history, victory with the spoils could only be obtained by abject subserviency to the slave aristocracy. And now, what they mean to restore is slavery to its former power. Again the South is to be a unit for the interests of slavery; again the united Southern vote with a few Northern States is to command our elections; again the knife of secession is to be flourished over the head of the nation; again our legislator and the people are to be terrorized with the cry: “Do what our Southern brethren want you to do, or they will dissolve



the Union once more!" and the terrors of the past are to be used as a powerful means of intimidation for the future. Again this great nation is to be swayed, not by reason, but by fear, and again the interests and the virtue of the people are to be traded away for public plunder. And so they stand before the Rebels as humble suppliants, with this ignominious appeal: "We are tired of being our own masters; come back and rule us: We are tired of our manhood; come back and degrade us! We do not feel well in a Union firmly established; come back and threaten us! We are eager once more to sell out the liberties and honor of the people for the sweets of public plunder; come, oh come back and corrupt us!" And in this disgraceful supplication they call upon a great and noble people to join them: to join after deeds and sacrifices so heroic, after a struggle for the nation's free and great future, so glorious; to join at a moment when at last victory crowns our helmets, and when the day of peace, bright and warm, dawns upon our dark and bloody fields. Ah, if it could be, if the nation could so basely forget her great past and her greater future; if the nation could so wantonly denude herself of all self-respect and shame and decency, and plunge into the mire of this most foul prostitution; if this could be, then, indeed, betrayed mankind could not hate us with a resentment too deep: all future generations could not despise us with a contempt too scorching; there would be no outrage on the dignity of human nature in the annals of the world for which this base surrender would not furnish a full apology. If it could be so, then every one of your great battles would be nothing but a mass murder of the first degree; the war with its ruin and desolation would have been nothing but an act of wanton barbarism. Then be silent of your glorious exploits, you soldiers in the field; conceal your scars and mangled limbs, you wounded heroes; you mothers and wives and sisters, who wear your mourning with pride, hide your head in shame—for the triumphant rebel sits upon the graves of our dead victories, whip in hand, and with a mocking grin laughs at the dastardly self-degradation of his conquerors. It is difficult to speak about this with calmness; yet we must make the effort.

This, then, is our situation: We have to choose between two lines of policy, represented by two parties—the one fully pre-

ciating the tendency of the movement, and resolutely following the call of the times; fully and honestly determined to achieve the great object of preserving the nation, and with consistent energy using every legitimate means necessary for that purpose; striking the rebellion by crippling the strength of the traitors, and restoring loyalty by stopping the source of treason; a party, not infallible indeed, but inspired by the noblest impulses of the human heart and impelled by the dearest interests of humanity; in full harmony with the moral laws of the universe, in warm sympathy with the humane and progressive spirit of our age. Let its policy be judged by its fruits; the heart of mankind beating for our cause, the once down-trodden and degraded doing inestimable service for our liberty as well as their own; the armies of the Union sweeping like a whirlwind over Rebeldom, and the Rebellion crumbling to pieces wherever we touch it, would it be wise to abandon a course of policy, which, aside of our moral satisfaction, has given us such material guaranties of our success? And what inducement is offered to us for refusing it? Is it a policy still clearer and more satisfactory to our moral nature? Is its success still more certain, a result still more glorious? Let us see what they present us.

\* A party which does not dare to advance a single clear and positive principle upon which it proposes to act; a party which gives us nothing but a vague assurance of its fidelity to the Union coupled with the proposition of stopping the war, which alone can lead to the restoration of the Union, giving us a platform which its candidate does not dare to stand upon, and a candidate who quietly submits to the assertions of his supporters that he will be obliged to stand on the platform; a party which was waiting two months for a policy, and then found its policy upset by events two days after it had been declared; a party floundering like a drunken man between a treacherous peace and a faithless war, between disunion that shall not be and a kind of union that cannot be; a party which is like a ship without compass and rudder, with a captain who declares that he will not do what he is hired to do, with a set of officers who swear that he shall do it, with a crew who were enticed on board by false pretences and who are kept by the vague impression that there is something good in the kitchen, and that vessel bound for a port

which does not exist on the map. Is not this picture true in every touch? And why all this wild confusion of ideas and cross purposes? Why all these ridiculous absurdities in its propositions? Simply because that party refuses to stand upon the clear and irrevocable developments of history, and denies the stern reality of accomplished facts; because it repudiates the great and inexorable laws by which human events are governed; because it shuts its eyes against the manifest signs of the times; because, while pretending to save the Union, it protects the Union's sworn enemy; because it deems it consistent with loyalty to keep alive the mother of treason; in one word, because it insists upon saving slavery in spite of its suicidal crime. And to this most detestable monomania it is ready to subordinate every other principle, every other interest, every other consideration of policy. To save slavery is to throw all imaginable impediments in the way of every measure of the Government directed against the main strength of the rebellion; to save slavery it would rather have seen our armies doomed to defeat by weakness than strengthened for victory by the colored element; to save slavery it would rather have seen foreign governments interfere in favor of the rebellion than the heart of mankind attached to our cause by the glorious decree of liberty; to save slavery it insists upon interrupting the magnificent course of our victories by a cessation of hostilities, which would save the Rebellion from speedy and certain ruin; to save slavery it is ready to sacrifice the manhood of the people, and to lay them at the feet of the rebel aristocracy as humble supplicants for an ignominious rule. And this rank madness you would think of placing at the helm of affairs in a crisis which will decide our future forever.

I invite those of our opponents whose heads and hearts are not irretrievably wrapt in self-deception, to mount with me for a moment a higher watchtower than that of party. Look once more up and down the broad avenues of your history. Show me your men in the first great days of the republic whose names shine with untarnished lustre—the men whom you parade in the foremost ranks when you boast before the world abroad of your nation's greatness—there is not one of them who did not rack his brain to find a way in which the republic could be delivered

of the incubus of slavery. But their endeavors were in vain. The masses of the people did not see the greatness of the danger; their eyes were blinded by the seductive shine of momentary advantage. Then at once began one of those great laws—by which human affairs right themselves—to operate. It is the law that a great abuse, urged on by its necessities, must render itself insupportable, and defy destruction. Slavery grew under your fostering care; with its dimensions grew its necessities. It asked for security at home, and what it asked was given. It asked for its share in what we held in common, and what it asked was given. It asked for the lion's share, and accompanied its demand with a threat, and what it asked was given. Then it asked all we held in common. It asked for a dictatorship, and the accompanying threat became a defiance. The people of the North rose up and said: "So far and no farther!" Then slavery, with fatal madness, raised its arm against the palladium which cannot be touched with impunity; it urged into our hands the sword of self-defence; with blind insolence it threw into the face of the nation the final challenge: "Kill me or I will kill thee!" The challenge could not be declined, the nation refused to be killed, and slavery had the full benefit of its defiance. Do you not see that this decree of self-destruction was written by a hand mightier than that of mortal man? And you will stand up against it? What are you about to do? Stop and consider! Slavery is dying fast. Its life is ebbing out of a thousand mortal wounds. Even its nearest friends in Rebellion are standing around its deathbed in utter despair; even they give it up. Hardly anything remains to be done but to close its eyelids, and to write the coroner's verdict: "Slavery having challenged the American nation to mortal combat, killed itself by running madly unto the sword of its antagonist." There it lies. And you—you will revive it? What? That you should have served it when it was in the fulness of its power, that, with a violent stretch of charity we may understand, although it revolted our hearts. But to revive it when it is dying! To think of galvanizing into new life the hideous carcass whose vitality was extinguished by the hand of fate! To attempt to fasten anew and artificially upon the nation a curse of which for a century she longed in vain to be rid, and which

at last is being wiped out by the great progress of providential retribution! To resuscitate and nurse to new power of mischief the traitress that fell in an attempt to assassinate the republic! Revive slavery in the midst of the nineteenth century! Have you considered the enormity of the undertaking? Look around you! You see a great republic purified of her blackest stain, which sent a blush of shame to her cheeks when the world abroad pointed to it; you see the heart of a noble people relieved of the galling burden of wrong and guilt; you see the nations of the world stretching out to us their brotherly hands and cheering us on with their inspiring acclamations; from the down-trodden and degraded on earth to the very angels in heaven you hear all good and generous hearts join in a swelling chorus of gratitude and joy, for at last the great iniquity is tumbling down—and now strike heaven and earth in the face and revive it? Now poison the future of the republic again, now imperil the life of the nation again and revive it? Are you in earnest?

Here we stand before an atrocity so appalling that we seek in vain for a parallel on the darkest pages of history; we search in vain the darkest corners of the human heart to find a motive or a reason that might excuse a crime so ridiculous for its folly, a folly so disgraceful for its wickedness. But, thank God, it is impossible! You think you can stem the irresistible current of events with your contrivances of political legerdemain, with your peace-cry, which is treason, and your war-cry, which is fraud; with your hypocritical protests against a tyranny which does not exist, and your artful imposition of a "Union as it was," and cannot again be! With these pigmy weapons you think you can avert the sweep of gigantic forces! Poor schemers, you might as well try to bring a railroad train running at full speed back to its starting point by butting your little heads against the locomotive. You might as well try to catch in your arms the falling waters of the Niagara in the midst of the cataract, to carry them back to their source. In vain you sacrifice your honor for what is infamous. In vain you jeopardize the life of the nation for what is dead! The doom of your cause is written in the stars. If you love yourselves, and want to secure the respect of your children, then, I beseech you,

leave the scandalous and hopeless task to the ignorant and brainless, who may show as an excuse for the mad attempt the weakness of their minds, and to those hardened villains who have become as insensible to the secret lash of conscience as to the open contempt of mankind. But if you will not, then happy those of you whose names will sink into utter oblivion, for only they will escape the ignominious distinction of becoming a mark for the detestation of posterity. Revive slavery in the midst of the nineteenth century! And you dare to hope that the American people will aid in this crazy attempt?—in this crime against justice, liberty and civilization?—in this treason against future generations? You dare to expect the American nation to commit suicide that slavery may live? Poor men, desist! You are undone. You do not seem to know that he must fail who appeals to the cowardice of the American people. Get out of the way of the nation who marches with a firm step and a proud heart after the martial drum-beat of her destiny. She feels that the struggle of ages compresses itself into the portentous crisis of this hour. It is for coming centuries she fights; and already she sees before her what was once only a patriotic dream rise into magnificent, sunlit reality: Liberty! Liberty and Union! one and inseparable! now and forever!